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DE RUEHAK #5521/01 2641020
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 211020Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8876
INFO RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
RHMFIUHQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ4/ECJ5//
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//ISA-EUR/DSCA//
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC//J-5//
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 1128
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1323
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0523
RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO 0028
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 5171
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005521

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: MASS MARR PREL TU AF BK

SUBJECT: TURKEY: POL-MIL ROUND-UP, August 2006

(Note: This is one of a regular series of unclassified reports on significant Turkish defense and national security issues in the press and other open sources. End note.)

Contents

- National Security Council Convenes
- Turkish Defense Undersecretariat Restructuring
- Turkey's Security Relations with Other Countries
- Defense Industry Activity

National Security Council Convenes

¶1. Turkey's National Security Council (NSC) held its bi-monthly meeting on August 21. National security issue and the fight against terrorism topped the agenda of the meeting. Recent developments in the Middle East, humanitarian assistance to Lebanon and Palestine, Turkey's policy on Black Sea security and regional developments were among the other issues discussed.

Turkish Defense Undersecretariat Re-Structuring

¶2. Established in 1985 to develop modern defense industrial infrastructure in Turkey, Turkish Defense Undersecretariat (SSM) restructured its organization. Six additional heads of departments were added: Research & Development and Technology Management, Quality-Test Certification, International Cooperation, Naval Platforms, Electronic Warfare and Sensors, and Rocket-Missile and Ammunition. All of these positions were filled by employees promoted from within the organization. SSM will also hire a number of new personnel by the end of the year. According to one government contact, further personnel assignments at the level of chief of section and heads of department are expected by the end of the year.

Turkey's Security Relations with Other Countries

¶2. Afghanistan: Turkish Defense Minister met with his Afghan counterpart Gen Abdurrahim Wardak during his official visit to Kabul on August 6. During his visit, Gonul said Turkey will continue its assistance program to support rebuilding the country and developing the national army, as reported by Peshawar-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP). This visit was not reported by Turkish media.

The ISAF Kabul Regional Command Center started operations under tripartite command of Turkey-France-Italy on August 6. As part of its participation in this command, Turkey will increase its troop contribution in Afghanistan to the level of battalion, according to the semi-official Anatolian News Agency (ANA).

13. Bosnia-Herzegovina: Turkey signed a military cooperation agreement with Bosnia on August 14. The agreement was signed in Sarajevo by Turkish Military Attach Col Osman Aksakal and Bosnian Deputy Defense Minister Enes Becirbasic. The agreement covers cooperation in the fields of training, technology and science including the exchange of personnel, material, equipment, information and experience, as reported by the Bosnian Independent News Agency.

Defense Industry Activity

14. Turkey is planning to buy a new squadron of F-16 fighter jets worth at least \$ 1.5 billion as a stop-gap solution until new-generation fighter aircraft join its Air Force in the next decade. Air Force Chief General Faruk Comert said on August 30 that Turkey was planning to purchase 30 F-16s by 2011. Turkish military officials expect final agreement on the purchase before the end of this year if all technical and financial talks with Lockheed Martin go smoothly, according to the Turkish Daily News.

15. Procurement officials are to finalize the multibillion dollar ATAK helicopter tender this year. Four companies submitted bids (South Africa's Denel, Italy's Augusta Westland, German/French consortium Eurocopter, and Russia's Kamov) in the tender which was issued in February 2005, following the cancellation of an initial

ANKARA 00005521 002 OF 002

tender in the mid 1990s which had been awarded to Bell-Textron. Denel and Agusta Westland were named as the two finalists in this second tender. According to a defense analyst, it is possible that the military, under new Chief of the General Staff GEN Yasar Buyukanit (former Chief of the Turkish Land Forces) who took office on August 30, may push for a review as none of the two remaining options fully satisfies the command from operational and technical viewpoints (Ankara Turkish Daily News). However, according to a government contact announcement of a new tender with revised terms of condition cannot take place before general elections of 2007 in Turkey.

. Turkish Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul said on August 9 that Turkey reached an agreement with the US for purchasing 50 Slam-ER missiles (Standoff Land Attack Missiles-Expanded Response) for \$ 139 million from the US through Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program.

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